

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Hearing Date: March 4, 2021 8:00 AM

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COMMENTS FOR: Texas Department of Public Safety

Becki Smith

self, artist

Driftwood, TX

We need universal voter registration and simple, easy, mail in AND electronic voting opportunities. We need to STOP gerrymandering districts immediately.

Michelle Augustine

self

Georgetown, TX

I'm concerned about any legislation that suppresses voters. I support efforts to maintain early voting .that includes operating in the evenings on or weekends. I support having polling sites located in our lower economic areas, as transportation to polling sites can be an issue - these residents deserve to be able to exercise their right to vote. If reducing costs is an objective, then I support extending opportunities for Mail-in Ballots to all ages and having access to Ballot Box drop sites. As a tech-savvy senior citizen, I found it difficult this past year to apply online and to acquire a mail-in ballot -- which I never did receive. It seems to me that some tactics being used are the cry of "voter fraud" as a guise to suppress voting opportunities. Yet, research and Texas county clerks have shown facts, that all across Texas, there has been a minuscule amount of voter fraud. I fear Texas is reverting backwards to "Jim Crow" ways; I'd rather see Texas be a beacon of progress.

Jacquelyn Scherer, Dr.

self

San Antonio, TX

It is vital for our democracy that the greatest number of eligible voters be allowed and encouraged to cast a ballot in the least restrictive way. Only then will we have a truly representative government. It is not important which political party is favored or disadvantaged. If the party platforms and candidates keep the public good in mind, the will of the people will prevail.

Mary Harwood, Mrs.

Self - retired

Round Top, TX

I have been a poll worker for many years and have always been impressed with how carefully and professionally things are run. I have also voted by mail and cannot imagine how that process could be compromised. The elderly and handicapped need it! It makes voting so much easier.

Julie Strother

Self

Houston, TX

As a voting citizen of Texas, I strongly urge you to increase the ease in regard to how voting is done. This can be done in a number of ways. There should be an increase in online voter registration opportunities. There also needs to be a no excuse mail in ballot option. There also needs to be a robust tracking system so that a voter is assured that their mail in ballot was received and counted. The pandemic has proven why this is needed. There should be many secure drop boxes, and many more than 1 per county. Having only 1 in Harris County does not help Texans participate in a democratic Republic. New and inventive ways to vote, like drive through voting, must be allowed and increased. Volunteer voter registrars must continue to be allowed to assist with registering new and former voters. Early voting must be kept and increased in length. Proposals that in any way target black and brown communities, whether intentional or not, must not be approved. Polling locations must not be reduced in minority communities. Being able to vote at any polling location in your county can help reduce lines.

Our system of government is a representative democracy. This mandates that voters elect officials. Voters must be given every opportunity to vote. Anything less is unpatriotic and inconsistent with the values that this country and state hold dear. Any proposed laws that restrict access to voting go against what this country stands for.

Reuben Leslie

retired

Austin, TX

In my many years as an election judge on election days 1996-2020, I oversaw processing of hundreds of voters who were required to vote provisionally because they had, they believed, registered to vote at DPS but DPS had not transmitted their registration to voter registrars. Occasionally voters were able to vote because after extensive telephone time with staff checking more databases could find evidence of registration, but most had to vote provisionally. Voting provisionally takes a lot of voter time and patience particularly when polls are busy because each interview and paperwork completion with the voter can take 10 to 25 minutes. I believe a better job needs to be done by the DPS with the Secretary of State and County voter registrars to increase speed, thoroughness, and accuracy of DPS processing of voter registrations at DPS offices.
